

Remarks

The Office Action dated June 20, 2001 has been noted, and its contents carefully studied. It is also noted that this Office Action was a final rejection under 37 CFR § 1.116. Accordingly, and in order to ensure consideration and entry of the amendment to the claims, at least for purposes of appeal, a Request for Continued Examination under 37 CFR § 1.114 is being concurrently filed herewith. In addition, a request for extension of time and Notice of Appeal has also been filed.

It is noted that this Amendment was faxed in draft form on September 7, 2001 after a conversation with the Examiner, indicating that Applicants wanted to interview the application if the Examiner remained unpersuaded concerning allowability of the claims. Unfortunately, the Examiner did not review the draft prior to the first due date of September 20, 2001. Since that time, the Examiner and undersigned have exchanged phone messages, but no indication of the Examiner's position concerning the proposed draft has been received by the undersigned. Thus, in light of the impending new due date, this response has been formally filed.

As explained to the Examiner, Applicants believe there is a misunderstanding concerning the invention and the applied art. As indicated previously, if the Examiner remains unpersuaded, Applicants request an opportunity to discuss the application and prior art, preferably personally. Thus, in the possibility of an absence of a finding of allowable subject matter, the Examiner is courteously requested to call the undersigned so that such an interview may be conducted.

Turning now to the merits, instead of reiterating all of the previous arguments concerning the distinctions between the claimed invention and the cited Hansen reference, Applicant intends to initially address certain specific points raised in the final rejection, in particular, with respect to certain conclusions which the Examiner has reached, and which it is respectfully urged are incorrect.

More specifically, the Examiner's attention is invited to page 12 of the Office Action, in which he provides a response to Applicant's arguments. The Examiner has expressly stated that the bridge 24 of Hansen does not prevent bi-

directional coupling. Applicant previously attempted to distinguish over Hansen by reciting that the bi-directional transmission is over a complete network. The amendments hereto further address the characteristics of the complete network as illustrated in an exemplary manner by Figure 1 of the application and the corresponding description.

Addressing Hansen then, it is noted that Hansen provides for special tap devices 22 at each node on single branches of a complete network which provides filtering and load impedance conversion for coupling of signals to and from the network cable. However, when discussed with reference to the bridge 24, it is noted that the bridge will not allow bi-directional transmission through the bridge, for example, between respective branches of the complete network identified as Ethernet segments 12. Put more simply, greater details about the bridge 24 are provided by the illustration of Fig. 3 of Hansen which includes a signal splitter 36 for coupling the broadband signal input into the splitter through a transformer to up to 32 segments. Each of those segments are actually the Ethernet segments 12.

In this regard, addressing the Examiner's statement that the bridge 24 allows bi-directional coupling therethrough, attached are selected pages of a text discussing the operation of splitters. Thus, when discussed with reference to a simple diagram of a splitter having input port S and output ports A and B, splitters provide that no voltage appears at port B from an input signal applied at port A, so that there is infinite isolation between the ports. Similarly, the use of the 32-way splitter 36 in connection with the bridge 24 in Hansen provides isolation between the respective Ethernet segments 12 such that a signal traveling upstream to 32-way splitter 36 would not be able to pass to another Ethernet segment 12, and thus, there is no bi-directional transmission throughout the complete network.

By amendment to the claims, the characteristics of the invention are believed to have been more clearly recited in a manner which distinguishes over Hansen, particularly in light of this discussion. As such, allowance of all of the claims is now respectfully urged.

Nonetheless, should the Examiner have any comments, questions, or suggestions necessary to expedite the prosecution of the application, or to place

the case in condition for allowance, he is courteously requested to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. José Cortina', is written over a horizontal line.

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